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Biography.

A REMARKABLE EXPERIENCE,

In a Letter to the Rev. Mr. Newton.

Concluded from p. 406.

My dear and Rev. Sir,

LET us now turn the leaf, and contemplate the dawning of a glorious day—the rising of the Sun of righteousness, with healing under his wings.

Upon the evening of the twenty-sixth day of January, 1795, the Lord appeared as my *deliverer*. He commanded, and darkness was turned into light. The cloud which covered the mercy-seat fled away ! Jesus appeared as he is ! My eyes were not turned inward, but outward ! The gospel was the glass in which I beheld him. When our Lord first visited Saul upon the highway, he knew in a moment that it was the Lord, so did I ! Such a change of views, feelings, and desires, suddenly took place in my mind, as none but the hand of an infinite Operator could produce. Formerly I had a secret fear that it was presumption in me to receive the great truths of the gospel : now there appeared no impediment ; I beheld Jesus as the speaker in his word, and speaking to me. When he said “Come,” I found no difficulty in replying, “Yes, Lord ! thy pardoned rebel comes.” If not the grace of God, what else could effect such a marvellous change ? I chiefly viewed the atonement of Jesus as of *infinite* value, as a price paid for my redemption, and cheerfully accepted by the Father. I saw love in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, all harmonizing in pardoning and

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justifying me. The sight humbled and melted my soul. Looking to what I felt was no *help* to my comfort ; it came directly from God, through his word.

The following evening, about nine o'clock, while sitting before the fire, writing to a reverend friend, I had such a charming, surprising view of sovereign, pardoning, redeeming, unmerited mercy, that I was hardly able to bear it. "The great doctrines of redemption, as stated in the Bible, opened to my view in a way I never experienced before. I beheld a crucified Jesus nigh me in the word. I threw away the pen, and turned about to see this great sight ! I looked stedfastly to the Lamb suffering for me ! So much was I overpowered with the magnitude of this discovery of eternal, boundless love and grace in Christ, that I felt a difficulty in breathing."

This view of my redeeming God in Christ completely swept away all the terrific horrors which had so long brooded over my mind, leaving not a wreck behind, but filling me with a joy and peace more than human—truly divine. I sat pensive, at one time beholding the pit from whence I was redeemed, at another, the hope to which I was raised. My soul rushed out in wonder, love, and praise, emitted in language like this : "Wonderful mercy ! Why me ! what is this ? Thanks be to God, who *giveth* me the victory through Jesus Christ, my Lord !" Shuddering at sin, as pardoned ; abhorring it ; wondering that ever I could have been guilty of such transgressions, I continued sitting wrapt up in silent wonder. For long after, when I thought of my hopes, I leapt for joy : I really had a glad heart. This visitation also created an extent of mildness and complacency in my temper, that I never felt before. I felt a burning love rising in my heart to *all* the brethren in Christ ; with a strong sympathy for all such as were not born of the Spirit. I earnestly breathed after their incorporation into the family of Christ.

A light shone upon the scriptures quite new to me. Passages, which formerly appeared hard to be understood, seemed plain as the A, B, C. Earthly crowns, sceptres, and thrones, appeared quite paltry in my eyes, and not worth desiring. I felt a complete contentment with my lot in life. I trembled to think of any abatement of my faith, love, and sensibility ; it required resolution to be resigned to remain long in the world. Indeed I could scarce admit the idea of long life. I feared the trials and vicissitudes connected with it, but was completely silenced with that noble saying of our reigning Redeemer, "My grace is sufficient for thee." I saw I was only warranted to mind the things of to-day, leaving the concerns of to-morrow to his wise disposal. I felt it easy to introduce spiritual conversation wherever I was, and to recommend Christ wherever I went. I saw that every thing, acceptable to God, or comfortable to ourselves, was the product of divine power.

er. I saw the folly and criminality of being too much in company, though composed of the best people in the world. I feel nothing more conducive to eternal peace and prosperity than a regular, meek, even walk.

I cannot close this detail without adding, that, in the time of my affliction, the doctrine of election appeared irritating and confounding ; now it appears marvellously glorious, and truly humbling. I pity Arminians, and every person who is offended, however secretly, with this doctrine. It is a *convincing proof* to me, that there is a great *defect* in their faith and love, and a want of submission to *plain scripture*. In my worst time I saw it to be a *truth*—only I wished it had not been true ; and often it seemed a check to every exertion. But to deny that it is contained in the Bible appears to be a door to downright deism.

I now stand upon a shore of comparative rest. Believing, I rejoice. When in search of comfort, I resort to the testimony of God ; this is that field which contains the pearl of great price. Frames and feelings are, like other created comforts, passing away ; but the word of the Lord endureth forever. What unutterable source of consolation is it, that the foundation of our faith and hope is ever, immutably, the same ! the sacrifice of Jesus *as acceptable and pleasing to the Father as ever it was* ! To this sacrifice I desire ever to direct my eye, especially at the first approach of any gloom or mental change.

After my deliverance, my idea of many things was much altered, especially about faith. I perceive that this principle in the mind arises from no exertion in the man, but the constraint of evidence from without. The Spirit takes the things of Christ, and discovers their reality and glory in such a manner to the mind of man, that it is not in his power to refuse his belief. It is no mighty matter, nor is it any way meritorious, to believe the sun is shining when your eyes are dazzled with the beams.

The internal evidence of the truth of revelation had ten thousand times more effect upon my mind, than all its external evidence. There is a divineness, a glory and excellence in the scriptures perceived by enlightened minds, which they cannot so describe as to make it intelligible to an unregenerate person.

Formerly the major part of my thoughts centered either upon the darkness I felt, or the light I enjoyed ; now they are mainly directed to Jesus, what he hath done, suffered, and promised : and I do find, when the eye is thus single, my whole frame is full of light.

Formerly I felt a constant propensity to talk of my doubts, fears, darkness, &c. now I feel a similar inclination to hint my enjoyments, faith, love, triumph, &c.

Formerly I had a certain kind of pleasure in hearing people complaining, talking of their bondage, &c. ; now it tries my patience

tience, the foundation of faith and hope appears so immovably firm ; at the same time, I hope I possess tender sympathy for all such, and my prayer is, that Jesus may loose their bonds, and set them free.

I plainly perceive the truth of what you have more than once told me, that a name among men is a *poor thing* ! It can give no relief in temptation, nor in a dying hour.

I never till now saw occasion for that divine exhortation, "In patience possess ye your souls!" Luke xxi. 19. But after taking a survey of eternal felicity, I see much need of patience to *wait* till my appointed moment arrive.

Formerly when a friend, or a minister, especially the latter, said a certain feeling was an evidence of grace, I snatched at it, and took comfort ; now nothing of this kind affects me, unless I perceive that it is evidently founded upon scripture.

While remarkable visitations continue, I believe the subject of them will be remarkably humbled ; but after they are past, such is human depravity, that he is apt to be proud, and boast of these very things which ought to operate in an opposite manner. Witness the case of Paul, who got a counterpoise to his rapturous discoveries, Cor. xii. 1. &c. : of this you kindly cautioned me some months ago, when I did not so well understand it.

My mind is wonderfully led out to gaze at the admirable skill of the divine Operator in his works of creation. I perceive a fund of wisdom displayed in the formation of a pile of grass, or a solitary weed on the road side.

As for his works of providence, they appear a second revelation, only not written.

Now, my dear Sir, to finish this long letter, I solemnly declare, I had no more hand in my deliverance from my dismal situation than the child unborn. My attention was invisibly, instantaneously, and powerfully drawn to the truth ; I saw it to be truth ; God's truth, and truth to me ! I now hold communion with God as my Father, Jesus as my Saviour, the Holy Spirit as my continual helper and sanctifier, with confirmed angels and men as my brethren. I value the communion of saints below. All is the doing of the Lord, and shall eternally be wondrous in my eyes.

I am, Rev. and dear Sir,

Your affectionate Friend and Servant.

ON

ON THE SENTIMENTS OF THE HINDOOS RELATIVE TO THE CREATION.

THE Hindoos imagine that the universe consists of fourteen worlds, seven of which are below the earth, and six above it. The worlds below are inhabited by serpents of various shape and prodigious size. Some they say have two heads, some ten, and others a hundred. Bafookee their king has a thousand heads, upon which he sustains the universe, while he himself is borne on the back of a tortoise, which is said to balance itself in open air. The worlds above they suppose to be inhabited by a body of aerial beings. Some of their Pundits place the sun in the fourth of them, while others consider him as encircling all in his course, and illuminating with his splendours the fourteen worlds. Their gods, Vishnoo, Seeb, and others, they regard as residing upon mount Soomeroo. This mountain, by which some conceive the north pole is intended, they say has its foundation in the lowest patal or world, and running through all the fourteen, like the stem of a flower, spreads itself at the top after the manner of a water-lily. On the formation of the universe they do not perfectly agree. The popular idea is, that the supreme being became resident in three qualities, by the names of Bruhma, Vishnoo, and Seeb ; the first to create, the second to preserve, and the third to destroy.

The acts of Bruhma, as creator, are in part described in the subsequent literal translation from the Rigvadie or Rich Veda, one of the most revered and valued books of India.

" Originally this universe was soul only ; nothing else whatever existed, active or inactive. He [Bruhma] thought, I will create worlds; thus he created these various worlds, light, mortal beings, and the waters. The atmosphere comprises light, the earth is mortal, and the regions below are the waters.

" He thought, these are indeed worlds. I will create *guardians of worlds*. Thus he drew from the waters, and framed an embodied being. He viewed him ; and of that being, so contemplated, the mouth opened as an egg ; from the mouth, speech issued ; from speech, fire proceeded : the nostrils spread ; from the nostrils breath passed, and from breath air was propagated. The eyes opened ; from the eyes a glance sprung, from that glance the sun was produced. The ears dilated ; from the ears came hearkening, and from hearkening the regions of space. The skin expanded ; from the skin hair arose, and from that grew herbs and trees. The breast opened ; from the breast mind issued, and from the mind, the moon."

This embodied being, they seem to consider as an assemblage of deities. " These deities being thus framed, fell into this vast ocean,

ocean, and to him [Bruhma] they came with thirst and hunger, and him they thus addressed. "Grant us a smaller size, wherein abiding we may eat food." He offered to them the form of a cow ; they said, "this is not pleasant for us." He exhibited to them the form of a horse. They said, "neither is that pleasant for us. " He showed them the human form ; they exclaimed, "WELL DONE ! OH ! WONDERFUL !" Therefore man alone is pronounced well-formed.

"He bade them occupy their respective places : fire, becoming speech, entered the mouth ; air, becoming breath, sought the nostrils ; the sun, becoming light, entered the eyes ; space became hearing, and occupied the ears ; herbs and trees became hair, and filled the skin ; and the moon, becoming intelligence, entered the breast."

It is curious to observe how much the human mind, in its unscriptural conjectures, is fond of the marvellous. The Talmudists say, that Adam reached from one end of the earth to the other, when first created ; but that, when he had sinned, God *squeezed* his stature to a hundred ells, the angels being terrified at his gigantic size. Mahomet taught the Arabians that Adam was as high as a tall palm tree ; and if you ask a Pundit the extent of the earth, he will answer, eight hundred thousand miles.

Of the form of the earth the Hindoos have no determinate ideas. They all agree that it consists of seven dweeps, but whether these dweeps are continents or islands, they are not agreed. The most general opinion is, that these seven dweeps surround each other, and that seven seas run between them. Among these seas one is said to be a sea of milk, which was churned to produce Luckshmee.

He has no conception that the world will have any end. The Pundits imagine that four joogs will follow one another in perpetual succession, the Sutya, the Treta, the Dwaper and the Kulee. When one succession of joogs expires, another commences. The Sutya joog, they say consisted of one million, seven hundred and twenty-eight thousand years. In this joog all men were perfectly pure and happy. In the Treta joog, human beings began to degenerate. It is said to have lasted twelve hundred and ninety-six thousand years. During the Dwaper joog, which continued eight hundred and sixty-eight thousand years, the degeneracy of man increased. The Kulee joog commenced five thousand years ago, and they say will continue four hundred and thirty-two thousand more. It is esteemed the age of wickedness ; nothing perfect can be performed, and the Brahmans have lost their energy. It is common for a native, when detected in lying, or cheating, to reply, "This is the Kulee joog, what can you expect ?"

It is time we dismiss these trifling ideas : but who can contemplate them, without commiserating the situation of the heathen world, and offering praises to God, whose work of creation his word so rationally, so divinely exhibits. It is one of the loud anthems of heaven, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they both are and were created." Happy the men who love and join the sacred song,

The dearest nerve about my heart,
Should it refuse to bear a part,
With my melodious breath :
I'd tear away the vital chord,
A bleeding victim to my Lord,
And live without that impious string,
Or show my zeal in death.

LIKELICES.

"*And he said unto her, what form is he of?*" 1 Sam. xxviii. 14.

MARTIN LUTHER.

HE was of a common stature, his body was robust. His eyes discovered a vivacity so piercing, that few could look upon him directly, when he fixed his glance upon them. His voice was soft but not clear. He wore his own hair in the simplest mode, and was usually seen in a cloak edged with ermine. Beza wrote an epigram on Luther, closing with this point,

Go, fabling Greece, and bid Alcides know,
His club as Luther's pen, gave no such blow.

JOHN BUNYAN.

He was tall and broad set, though not corpulent ; he had a ruddy complexion, with sparkling eyes, and hair inclining to red, but in his old age sprinkled with gray. His whole appearance was plain, and his dress unaffected and simple. His countenance was grave and sedate, and discovered such a serious frame of heart, as struck awe upon the carnal and irreligious.

DR. DODDRIDGE.

He was rather above the middle stature, extremely thin and slender. His deportment in company was strikingly polite, affable and agreeable. In conversation he greatly excelled ; his discourse being at once instructive and entertaining, and not unfrequently rising to the splendid. Dr. Kippis says, "he was not only a great man, but one of the most excellent and useful Christians, and Christian ministers, that ever existed."

GEORGE

GEORGE WISHART

Was tall of stature. He had black hair ; a long beard ; his person was comely, and his address courteous. He wore a frieze gown, a black sustain doublet, plain hose, and shirt of coarse canvass. Every few weeks or months, he would give his chief apparel to the poor, excepting his French cap, which he always kept a twelvemonth. He was a most famous and successful preacher of the gospel in Scotland, and was blessed with many seals to his ministry.

JEROM OF PRAGUE

Possessed a countenance discovering unusual firmness. He was a superior orator. His voice was clear, distinct and full ; his action every way proper to express indignation, or to awaken pity. Poggius, an enemy to his principles, says “ the greatest character in ancient story could not possibly go beyond him. If there is any justice in history, this man will be admired by all posterity.” With a cheerful countenance he met his fate. When bound to the stake with wet cords and an iron chain, observing the executioner about to set fire to the wood behind his back, he cried out, “ Bring thy torch hither ; perform thy office before my face ; had I feared death, I could have avoided it.”

GEORGE WHITFIELD.

His person was manly, and grew large as he advanced in years. His manner was often graceful and highly rhetorical ; though a cast in his eye, strongly marked, prevented the vivid impression which that organ is peculiarly suited to make ; yet no man with such a disadvantage, ever looked with stronger sensibility ; after a second hearing, the defect was forgotten. His voice was remarkably musical, and capable of the most various intonations. He had arrows in his quiver, that only himself knew how to sharpen. His labours in both hemispheres were immense, his courage undaunted, and his zeal not to be extinguished ; he fell a martyr to his work.

DR. ISAAC BARROW

Was of the lesser size, and lean ; in his strength extraordinary, in complexion fair and calm. His eyes grey, clear and shortsighted ; his hair of a light auburn, very fine and curling. He is well represented by the figure of Marcus Brutus on his denarii. What Cowley has asserted of Marcus, may be well applied to Dr. Barrow.

“ Virtue was thy life’s centre, and from thence
Did silently and constantly dispense
The gentle vigorous influence
To all the wide and fair circumference.”

Dr.

DR. JOHN OWEN.

His stature was tall, his visage grave, majestic and comely. His features finely proportioned. His complexion somewhat dark. His epitaph informs us that

“ While on the road to heaven,
 His elevated mind,
 Almost comprehended
 Its full glories and joys.
When he was consulted on cases of conscience,
 His resolutions contained
 THE WISDOM OF AN ORACLE.”



THE TURNPIKE GATE ON A SUNDAY.

THE bells from the several churches were sweetly chiming, to call to the house of prayer ; and whether it was the effect of imagination, or from some higher source operating upon my mind at the moment, I know not, but so it was, they seemed to form in my apprehension an echo to the gracious invitation of the word, as if they said, “ Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life.”

“ Bountiful Lord,” thought I, “ was it not enough to provide so rich a Saviour for poor sinners as Jesus, but dost thou open also in him “ fountains and streams from Lebanon ?” Dost thou cause channels of ordinances to be running through the kingdom for conveying the blessings of redemption, where the poor and the needy may come and receive freely, “ without money and without price ?”

Happy nation ! happy people ! O England, didst thou but know how rightly to appreciate thy mercies ! Surely, it may be said of our highly favoured island as it was of Judea of old, “ What nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for ?” We can enjoy our Sabbaths free and unmolested, while multitudes upon the face of the earth know not what a Sabbath means, nor ever heard the “ sound of the church-going bell !” Nay, to come nearer home, thousands of our neighbours on the continent have lost the very distinction of the holy day amidst the din of war, and the horrors of revolution !

I was hastening to the house of God, under the sweet impression of these thoughts, and in my mind anticipating the rich enjoyment this hallowed day opened to my views, when my mind

was suddenly arrested with the noise of passengers, some on horses and some in chariots, driving with eagerness towards the turnpike-gate, as if the attainment of every thing which could constitute happiness was thrown open to their pursuit.

I paused as I beheld the affecting sight. "Is it possible," I said to myself, as the busy throng glided by me, "is it possible that these can ever once have considered the great end and design of man, or the mercy of a Sabbath? Surely, they have never seen thy loveliness, thou blessed Redeemer of mankind! for had they known thee, this day would have been endeared to them as thine, bringing with it, as it doth, the blessings of salvation! And yet, methinks, even now, as the giddy crowd is hastening by, I behold thee (as thou art beautifully represented in thy sacred word) "standing at the gates, and at the entering in of the city," lifting up thy voice with all the tenderness which distinguishes thy character, saying, "O ye simple, when will ye understand knowledge? and ye fools, depart from folly!"

I felt my heart melting as I looked on. Oh, had I but the power of persuasion, (I said to myself) what a subject is here for entreaty! Here eloquence might find scope to lavish forth all her noblest powers!

Nothing but the consciousness of an inability to the service could have restrained the impulse I felt to go forth in argument or persuasion. Methought I could have caught one and another by the arm, and with all the winning affection of an awakened concern, I could have said, "My poor, unthinking brother, had either of you an idea that this Sabbath might be your last, would you or could you, consume it in the manner you intend! Would you wish to be found ending time and beginning eternity in the very act of bidding defiance to one of the most positive commands of God? Have you never heard the solemn, unalterable precept, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy?" And supposing, (what no human being can be sure may not be the case) supposing that before the shades of night close in upon the earth, the shades of death should close in upon your existence, how would your soul be harrowed up to all the possibilities of misery, to hear the first tremendous voice hailing your approach into the world of spirits, with saying, "This is the wretch who bade Omnipotence do his worst, and found death in the moment of breaking his Sabbath?"

The thought wounded as it passed over my mind. It brought to my recollection an awful circumstance of this kind, which took place in the town of——; (the Lord only knows how numerous they may be elsewhere) the particulars of which are recorded on a monument in the church-yard there. It affected me so much in the perusal, that I could not resist the desire of transcribing it.

In

“In Memory

Of the unfortunate end of

Robert Merit and Susannah his Wife, Elizabeth Tiley her sister,

Martha Carter, and Joseph Derham,

Who were all drowned in the flower of their Youth,

In a Pond near the Town called Drews,

On Sunday the 30th June;

And are together underneath entombed.”

On another compartment of the stone is added,

“Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy.

This Monument, as an awful Monitor to Young People,

To remember their Creator in the Days of their Youth,

Was erected by Subscription.”

But to return. Amidst the group which I beheld turning their backs on the house of God, as if judgment and not mercy was to be expected there, one party caught my attention with more than ordinary concern: it was a young couple, with a lovely child of about (as it should seem) a year old. They were in what is called a gig; and the sweet unconscious babe lay in its mother's arms. The Father's whole attention was engaged to drive a horse apparently not much used to the service; and he himself still less accustomed to the province he had assumed.

Independent of the danger arising from the restiveness of the poor animal, and the want of skill in the driver, there was cause of continual apprehension, from the number of coaches, and chariots, and horses, passing and repassing on the road. As I looked on, they seemed to me as if, in the moment they drove by, they had several narrow escapes from being crushed between the larger carriages, running in every direction. “What! (I said to myself) if a single untoward circumstance should happen! Should the horse take fright, or the wheel on either side get entangled, or the gig upset, in either case, what can preserve them? And should a morning so fair and promising bring on evil before night should death on his pale horse appear, what follows?”

My mind shuddered at the images I had raised, I sought to forget the whole in turning from the scene, and hastening to the church: The bells were still chiming, and I still interpreted their language: “Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon; look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir, and Hermon; from the lions' dens; from the mountains of the leopards.”

“Yes,” said my heart, as I construed the gracious invitation, “I will come with thee my beloved; for thy love is better than wine. Neither shall the goodly mountain of Lebanon, which Moses, the man of God, so ardently longed to see; nor Shenir, nor Hermon, keep me back. Lions in human form, and sinners whose

whose various hue, like the spots of the leopard, are in every place ; but, Lord, I will come out from among them, and touch not the unclean thing. Yes, Lord, I will attend thee to the ordinances of thy grace, where "the King is held in the galleries," and where he "manifests himself otherwise than he doth to the world." At thy call I come, and will go forth with thee "into the fields, and lodge in the villages, and get up early to the vineyards." For the field of thy scripture, and the villages of thy people, and the vineyards of thy church, will all be sweet and precious when Jesus is in the midst, and where he gives his loves."

Oh, did the world but know the sweets of that gracious communion which takes place between Jesus and his people ! Had they an apprehension of that "joy which is unspeakable and full of glory," which ariseth from the mutual communications, when he imparts of his fulness and exchanges for their emptiness, we should not find the wretched mistake which is now so often made in the prosecution of things temporal, to the loss of those which are eternal !

I forgot a while, in the house of prayer, the distressing sights I had left behind me in the street. Like the church brought unto the banqueting-house, "I sat under the shadow of Jesus with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste."

"Jesus, one day beneath thine eye,
To hear thy gracious voice,
Exceeds a whole eternity
In empty, carnal joys.
Had I the world at my command,
With all th' expanse of sea,
For one bless'd hour at thy right hand,
I'd give the whole away."



REVIEW OF DR. REED'S SERMON.

A Sermon, preached before the convention of the Congregational ministers in Boston, May 27, 1807. By JOHN REED, D. D. Pastor of the First Church and Congregational Society in Bridgewater.

Matthew xxiii. 8, 9, 10.

BUT BE YE NOT CALLED RABBI : FOR ONE IS YOUR MASTER, EVEN CHRIST : AND ALL YE ARE BRETHREN. AND CALL NO MAN YOUR FATHER UPON THE EARTH ; FOR ONE IS YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN ; NEITHER BE YE CALLED MASTERS, FOR ONE IS YOUR MASTER, EVEN CHRIST.

IN a late publication upon a disputed subject, Dr. Reed displayed much candour, as well as much ingenuity, fair reasoning, and true

true criticism ; but in this discourse before a convention of ministers of his own denomination, he has strangely betrayed a want of perspicuity, a want of consistency, and a still greater want of candour. This we most charitably ascribe to his unhappily undertaking to defend his darling error which he found himself unable to support to his own satisfaction. Had he taken his text for his guide, instead of a motto, it would have led him to illustrate the duty and importance of men's exercising their private judgment, in forming their religious sentiments according to the word of God. But instead of pursuing this natural and luminous method, he wanders far and wide in the paths of obscurity, ambiguity, inconsistency, and the grossest bigotry.

Though he is constrained to acknowledge the Bible to be a *perfect* rule of faith ; yet he employs all his ingenuity and learning to make it appear, that this *perfect* rule is so dark and obscure, that no man, with the best head and heart, can possibly understand it. So that after all denominations of Christians have done their utmost to form their religious opinions according to the sacred scriptures, they all remain in a state of doubt and uncertainty, whether they have adopted one true doctrine of the gospel. This seems to be his real meaning, though he concedes, that "the *essential* doctrines and duties of the Christian religion are clearly delineated in the *history* of our Saviour, and in the transactions and discourses of his prophets and apostles, in plain and familiar language, and in a method suited to the capacities and circumstances of all persons in every nation and age of the world." But how can this be true, if the prophetical, historical, political, biographical, proverbial, *doctrinal*, and controversial parts of scripture, be so obscure, as he has before represented ? In what book, in what chapter, or in what verse of the Bible, shall we find the *essential* doctrines and duties of religion clearly delineated, if the whole volume be involved in thick and impenetrable darkness ? The obscurity, which the Doctor has laboured to throw upon the Bible is calculated to gratify deists and other heretics, and to make sad the hearts of God's people. It is a wound given to the cause of Christ, in the house of his friends !

From this obscurity he makes a transition to ambiguity and inconsistency. It is extremely difficult to know what he means, when he talks about that candour, charity, or catholicism, which he supposes Christians ought to exercise towards each other. Sometimes he seems to intimate, that this mutual affection should have some limitation ; but at other times, that it should be unlimited and universal. He acknowledges, "Christians are certainly accountable to Christ, if not to one another, for their religious opinions, even in those particulars which are not absolutely essential. It is therefore of importance to have our opinions founded in truth, and for us to be united in true opinions. Union

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in error, although it might produce unity of affection, would be a greater calamity than disunion." But after this concession, which seems to limit charity to its proper objects, he observes, "It is impossible to say how far persons may differ from us, or err in opinion, and yet be good and virtuous." And again he says, "All those persons, who profess to believe the Christian religion, and live agreeably to their profession, are to be viewed and treated as brethren." And again he says, "If the moral character and conduct of these persons be such, as would entitle them to our brotherly love and charity, provided they were of the same sentiment with us, we must acknowledge, that they have not forfeited their claim by adopting different opinions." To support this unlimited charity, he quotes Christ's declaration, that men should know one another by their *fruits*, even as a tree is known by its fruit. And upon the authority of this text asserts, that "the various opinions of professed Christians are never styled *fruits* in the sacred volume." Now, if this were true, that religious sentiments do not belong to the moral character of men, and they may be really pious in the profession and belief of any system of sentiments whatever, why does the Doctor exclude atheists and deists from the extended arms of his charity? He allows, "Atheists and other infidels do not consider themselves, nor can they be considered by us, as Christian brethren." Why not? It is presumed, that as fair, amiable, moral characters can be found among professed atheists and infidels, as among Arians, Socinians, Arminians, or Calvinists. His rule of charity allows and requires us to believe and treat all men as really pious, who maintain a fair, moral character, whether they believe or disbelieve the Bible: or whether they believe or disbelieve every doctrine contained in it. But it is far from being true, that "the opinions of men are never styled *fruits* in the sacred volume;" or never represented as forming a part of their moral character. Christ said of the Scribes and Pharisees, "In vain they do worship me, *teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*" And he said to his disciples, *Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.* This they did not at first clearly apprehend, but after Christ explained himself, *then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.* He also told the Jews in general, *If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.* Paul tells the Galatians, *Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, HERESIES.* Speaking of the man of sin and of those who should imbibe his errors, he says, *For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth.* Having directed Timothy how to preach, he says, *If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of*

of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness ; he is proud knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness. From such withdraw thyself. And again he says to the same person, Shun profane and vain babblings ; for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker, of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus, who concerning the truth have erred, saying, That the resurrection is past already ; and overthrow the faith of some. He commands Titus, To reject a man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition ; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself. And the apostle Peter more clearly describes, and more pointedly condemns heretics. There were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in DAMNABLE HERESIES, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. What candid, intelligent man, after reading these passages, will presume to say, that there is no such thing as essential error, that it cannot be known, and that when it is known, it ought not to be rejected, censured, and condemned ? If Dr. Reed had not bewildered himself, by his own ambiguity, sophistry, and inconsistency, he would not have thrown out such crude, incoherent, and absurd notions, as he has done, concerning Christian charity, or universal catholicism. But after this, it is not strange, that he should discover the most contracted and bitter bigotry. Bigotry does not consist in a man's believing and adhering to the truth ; or in his rejecting and censuring error : but in his believing and adhering to error, and in rejecting and censuring truth. This, we believe, is a proper and full definition of bigotry. With this idea in view, let any one peruse the latter part of the Doctor's discourse, and he cannot fail to discover the grossest bigotry. He sets up his false notion of charity as a most precious and important truth, and deals out his censures in a high tone against all who do not adopt it, and act upon it. He represents them as proud, self-righteous, censorious creatures, who are full of prejudice and malignity. He compares them to the worshippers of Baal, and the murderers of the Son of God, and exerts the whole force of his imagination, in drawing their characters in the blackest colours. But who are these monsters in human and Christian shape ? They may be the apostles, who embraced the truth, and condemned error. They may be the most pure part of the Christian church, who amidst the errors and delusions of the heterodox, maintained the great doctrines of the gospel, and censured those who made shipwreck of the faith. They must be all those, who believe and maintain all the essential doctrines of Christianity, and censure all such as deny them. Could any thing but a fond, superstitious attachment to his own false notion of charity or catholicism, lead

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the Doctor to feel and express so much bitter bigotry? For he is the bigot, and *not those* whom he stigmatizes as such. They believe the truth and adhere to it, and for that reason censure those who deny the truth and embrace essential errors. But he seems to think, that an old hackneyed sentence must forever stop the mouths of the orthodox, and forbid them to censure any mortal for error. "It should always be remembered, that *we differ from our antagonist as much as he differs from us.*" Apply this to Christ, and how will it sound? He differed as much from the Scribes and Pharisees, as they did from him. Apply it to the apostle Paul, and how will it sound? He differed as much from those who preached another gospel, and whom he pronounced accursed, as they did from him. Apply it to Dr. Reed, and how will it sound? He differs as much from the atheist, the deist, and the universalist, as they do from him. Shall we hence conclude, that if we are right in our religious opinions, and others are wrong in theirs, that we have no more right to censure them, than they have to censure us? This is a strange way of arguing. There is another mode of reasoning upon this subject much more correct. It runs in this form: If we are right in our religious sentiments, then those who differ from us, differ from the Bible. This Dr. Reed allows to be the standard of both faith and practice. And how does it appear, notwithstanding all he has said about the obscurity of the Bible, that a church of Christ cannot determine, whether one of its members does not break the law of faith, and deserve to be censured and rejected as an heretic? It is as easy to determine, according to scripture, in many cases, what is censurable heresy, as what is censurable immorality. Whoever allows, that there are *essential* doctrines of the gospel, must allow there may be *essential* errors; and whoever allows, that there may be *essential* errors, must allow, that such errors ought to be censured and condemned by those, who hold to the form of sound words. The Doctor's concession, therefore, that there are *essential* doctrines of the gospel, overthrows his whole scheme of universal, unlimited catholicism. The best defence of error is often the best defence of truth. The Doctor's discourse is calculated to convince every discerning, candid mind, that his scheme is false and cannot be supported. This very desirable effect, we hope and believe, it will generally, if not universally produce in the minds of its readers.

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

"THE preparations" [for the resurrection of Christ] "were now fully formed in both worlds, and all things stood in readiness for the moment in which the arm of the Lord should be revealed.

"Twice

"Twice had the sun gone down upon the earth, and all, as yet, was quiet at the sepulchre ; death held his sceptre over the Son of God ; still and silent the hours passed on ; the guards stood by their posts ; the rays of the midnight moon gleamed on their helmets and on their spears ; the enemies of Christ exulted in their success ; the hearts of his friends were sunk in despondency and sorrow ; the spirits of glory waited in anxious suspense to behold the event, and wondered at the depths of the ways of God. At length the morning star arising in the east, announced the approach of light ; the third day began to dawn upon the world ; when, on a sudden, the earth trembled to its centre, and the powers of heaven were shaken ; an angel of God descended, the guards shrunk back from the terror of his presence, and fell prostrate on the ground : "his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment was white as snow." He rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and sat upon it. But who is this that cometh forth from the tomb, with dyed garments from the bed of death ? he that is glorious in his appearance, walking in the greatness of his strength ? It is thy Prince, O Zion ; Christian, it is your Lord. He hath trodden the wine-press alone ; he hath stained his raiment with blood : but now, as the first-born from the womb of nature, he meets the morning of his resurrection. He arises a conqueror from the grave ; he returns with blessings from the world of spirits ; he brings salvation to the sons of men. Never did the returning sun usher in a day so glorious ; it was the jubilee of the universe. The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted aloud for joy. The Father of Mercies looked down from his throne in the heavens ; with complacency he beheld his world restored : he saw his work that it was good. Then did the desert rejoice ; the face of nature was gladdened before him, when the blessings of the Eternal descended as the dew of heaven, for the refreshing of the nations.

"Now we know that our souls are independent of death ; and in the same scene we may discover the pledge of God, that they shall be again embodied.

"They are the thoughtless and profane alone to whom a rational piety is an object of ridicule, and we betray much weakness of mind, not by respecting religion, but by being afraid to possess it."

SINGULAR CREED.

IN a Mahometan catechism, lately printed for the use of children at Constantinople, are found the following articles.

"I believe that for fifty thousand years the righteous shall repose under the shade of the terrestrial paradise. Each of the prophets

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has in paradise a basin for his own use. I believe in the water-pools of paradise. The water is whiter than milk and sweeter than honey. On the ridges of the pools are vessels to drink out of; they are bordered with stars. The floor of paradise is musk, the stones silver, and the cement gold. I believe in the bridge Sirat, which passes over the bottomless pit. It is as fine as a hair, and as sharp as a sabre. All must pass over it, and the wicked shall be thrown off."

Amid such confusion and carnality of idea, forget not, O believer, to pray for the coming of the kingdom of Jesus. Offer to him thy sacrifice of thanksgiving for those divine consolations his word imparts, and which he has permitted thy soul to share.

Not the feign'd fields of heath'nish bliss,
Could raise such pleasures in the mind;
Nor does the Turkish paradise
Pretend to joys so well refin'd.

Ev. Int.

For the Mass. Miss. Magazine.

ON DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

No. I.

THERE is no doctrine of Divine Revelation so plain, reasonable and evident, as not to have been misunderstood, perverted and denied by some who live under the light of the gospel and call themselves Christians. The doctrine of *Divine Providence* which, one would think, none but an atheist could controvert, has met with as much opposition in the Christian world, as any doctrine of the Bible. Those, who professedly believe this doctrine, differ materially in their conceptions and explanations of it. They differ respecting the *nature* of Divine Providence; but they differ more respecting its *extent*. It is proposed to inquire into both these, in the following essay; in which inquiry, we may be guided by the words of Christ recorded in Matt. x. 29, 30. *Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.* In these words our Lord teaches us the *nature* of Divine Providence. He represents it as the *agency* of God. *One of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.* Though sparrows may fall to the ground by various means, yet they never fall without God: his *hand* is concerned in producing the fall of a sparrow. Our Lord here teaches us also, the *extent* of Divine Providence. It extends even to sparrows; which are such little incon siderable creatures, that two of them used to be sold for a farthing; it extends to so trifling an event as the fall of one of these little birds to the ground. It also extends to the very hairs of the head. *The very hairs of your head are all numbered.*

Divine

Divine Providence, then, is universal. Agreeably to the above passage of scripture, we shall adduce some arguments to prove,

1. That Divine Providence consists in God's agency.

2. That Divine Providence is universal.

To prove that Divine Providence consists in God's agency, we may observe,

1. That Divine Providence does not consist in God's *permission*. It is true, God permits things to be as they are, and events to come to pass as they do, i. e. he does not exert his power to prevent them. But this divine permission is not Divine Providence. Bare permission effects nothing. Divine permission would never make the sun rise and set, the grass and trees grow, the bodies of animals move, and the wills of men act. Divine permission neither causes nor modifies any thing or event, either in the natural or moral world. As the universe is as dependent upon God for its preservation as for its creation; did God merely exercise permission towards beings, things, and events, the consequence would be, their annihilation. Bare permission never caused so much as a sparrow to fall, or a hair of the head to grow. But,

2. If Divine Providence does not consist in divine permission, then it must consist in divine agency. It is by the operation of his hand, or by the exercise of his power, that God causes things to exist, creatures to act, and events to take place. What are called the laws of nature, are those fixed and uniform modes of operation which God hath seen fit to prescribe to himself. What have been called divine restraints are nothing but the agency of God, setting bounds to the motions of matter and the actions of men. God's providence and his agency are commensurate; they are one and the same thing.

3. The above definition of Divine Providence corresponds with the language of scripture. The inspired writers represent God's Providence both in the natural and moral world, as his powerful and efficient agency in "preserving and governing his creatures and their actions." His providence in the natural world is represented by such expressions as the following: *Thou makest darkness, and it is night—He causeth grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man—He watereth the hills from his chambers—He sendeth the springs into the vallies, which run among the hills—Who commandeth the sun—Who alone spreadeth out the heavens—Who doeth great things past finding out.* God's Providence in the moral world is represented by such expressions as these: *The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water, he turneth it whithersoever he will—A man's heart deviseth his way; but the Lord directeth his steps—I will give them one heart—He turned their heart to hate his people, to deal subtly with his servants.* We now proceed to show,

II. That Divine Providence is *universal*.

1. This is evident from the dependence of all creatures and things upon God for their continuance in existence. It requires the

has in paradise a basin for his own use. I believe in the water-pools of paradise. The water is whiter than milk and sweeter than honey. On the ridges of the pools are vessels to drink out of; they are bordered with stars. The floor of paradise is musk, the stones silver, and the cement gold. I believe in the bridge Sirat, which passes over the bottomless pit. It is as fine as a hair, and as sharp as a sabre. All must pass over it, and the wicked shall be thrown off."

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the same power to *preserve*, as to *create*. It requires a constant exertion of creative power to preserve created beings and things in existence. Preservation is but *creation continued*. It is not derogatory to the divine power, to say that God cannot make a creature that shall exist independent of his constant agency : for this would be to communicate an essential and incommunicable attribute of the Godhead. All creatures and things in the universe are, every moment, dependent upon God for their existence and all their properties. *In him they live—and have their being.* Should God cease to operate, all creatures would drop into *nothing*. Divine Providence, therefore, is necessarily as extensive as the creation.

2. That Divine Providence is universal is evident from the dependence of all creatures and things upon God, for all their *motions*. As they live, so they *move in God* : or, as it might be more correctly translated, *are moved*. Material bodies are moved by divine agency, according to established laws of operation. All animated creatures, whether rational or irrational, are entirely dependent upon God for all the motions of their bodies, and all the movements and affections of their minds. All motion implies a mover. But no body, or mind, at rest, can cause itself to move ; for this would imply that such body or mind might act before it began to act, or have one motion before the first. God is necessarily the first cause of all motion in the universe. Were it possible for the divine agency to cease, for a moment, all motion, in the universe, would instantly cease : the planets would stop, the heart would cease to beat ; no thought, no volition would exist in the minds of creatures. And hence, as all events, both great and small, good and evil, are the consequence of some motion either of body or mind, or of both, it follows, that the Divine Providence or Agency is universal.

3. The universality of Divine Providence is fully asserted in sacred scripture. A few passages only, to this effect, are here quoted. *The Lord hath made all things for himself ; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil—There is not evil in the city and the Lord hath not done it—I form the light and create darkness ; I make peace and create evil ; I, the Lord, do all these things—Who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will—Of him, and through him, and to him are all things ; to whom be glory forever.*

No. II.

HAVING endeavoured, in the preceding number, to make it appear, that Divine Providence consists in the universal and unremitting agency of God, we shall now consider two or three popular objections to the doctrine.

Objection 1. It is said, if Divine Providence consists in the universal agency of God ; if he constantly produces all things, causes all

all motion, and brings to pass all events ; it follows, that there is but one agent in the universe.

Answer. It is granted that there is but one *First Cause* in the universe, upon whom all *second causes* constantly depend. But, notwithstanding this, there are as many agents in the universe, as there are voluntary beings. Whoever acts is an agent. And by what process of reasoning can it be proved, that action is incompatible with dependence ? Why may not a dependent creature act, as well as the independent Creator ? What inconsistency is there in supposing, that a creature may act, while, at the same time, he is acted upon ? When God, by his agency, causes a planet to move ; it is the planet that moves, and not God. And when God, by his agency, causes one of his voluntary creatures to do an action ; the creature does it, and not God. While God works in his rational creatures *to will and do*, they *will and do* as really, as if they were independent of their Creator. Cause and effect are two distinct things. The one always precedes the other. Divine agency is the cause of creature agency ; and is, therefore, antecedent to it, and distinct from it. Divine Providence, so far from excluding, actually produces the agency of all voluntary creatures. The agency of God necessarily makes all his intelligent creatures agents.

Obj. 2. It is alleged, that to represent Divine Providence as the universal agency of God, is to make it interfere with the accountability of mankind. It is asked, How can men be accountable or worthy of praise or blame, for those exercises and actions which God causes them to put forth ?

Ans. This objection is built upon the preceding, and must fall with it. If men are not machines, but, in dependence upon divine agency, do act, and act voluntarily too ; then they may be accountable for their actions. If it is possible for men to be accountable, they must be so for their voluntary actions. So far as accountability is concerned, we have nothing to do with divine agency. It is sufficient, that men, while acted upon, act themselves voluntarily. They are not accountable for the divine agency, but for their own agency. We are all conscious that we act voluntarily ; and, consequently, feel accountable for our conduct : while reason and revelation concur to teach us, that Divine Providence is universal, and that, consequently, all rational creatures act under the efficient and constant agency of the Supreme Being.

Obj. 3. It has been said, that the view which has been given of Divine Providence, is derogatory to the wisdom and majesty of God. To represent Divine Providence as universal, is said to attribute trifling and meanness to the Deity. What, it is asked, shall the great God stoop so low as to attend to and constantly employ his agency about all the little objects and trifling events of this little world ?

Ans.

Ans. This objection originates in wrong apprehensions of the Deity and his works. It should be considered that God is in every place, and that he can as easily govern all events as one. Further, it should be considered, that, with respect to the Deity, there is no such thing as small or great. All created beings and things are before him as the *small dust of the balance*. Those things, which appear to us the greatest, are no bigger, compared with the infinite God, than those things which appear to us the least. A drop of water, compared with Deity, is as big as the ocean ; and a particle of dust, as big as the planet Jupiter. An insect that stands upon the point of a chapel needle, is no farther removed from the power and wisdom of the Creator, than the most mighty and intelligent angel that stands before the throne. For, between finite and infinite there is no comparison. Besides, it is too much for us to say, that any object or any event is trifling and unimportant. A mote that flies in the air, may be destined to enter the lungs and put a period to the life of an emperor, and thus cause the subversion of an empire. The gaggling of a flock of geese once saved the city of Rome from being sacked. Little things are connected with great things : apparently trifling events are connected with the most momentous. And it is as much a part of divine wisdom, and equally as becoming the majesty and greatness of God, to number the hairs of the head as to count the stars of heaven, and to direct the falling of a sparrow, as to direct the conflagration of a world.

No. III.

INFERENCES AND REMARKS.

1. IF Divine Providence is God's universal agency, in upholding all things and causing all events, we may here learn what foundation there is for the distinction which is made in the use of the term providence, as applied to different events. Some events are called *common providences* ; some events are called *extraordinary providences* ; some events are called *miraculous providences* ; and some events are called *gracious providences*. These different appellations given to different events, when properly understood, do not imply, that Divine Providence is of different kinds. Divine Providence is, in its nature, always the same, let the events produced be what they may. It is always the divine agency. Divine Providence is called by different names, when considered as concerned in different events, not because these events are produced by different causes, but by the same cause acting under different circumstances. *Common Providences*, such as the alternate succession of day and night, or the regular returns of the seasons, are such events as the divine agency produces frequently. *Extraordinary or remarkable providences*, such as the plague of London, the bursting of a volcano, or the shock of an earthquake, are such events as the divine agency

agency produces but seldom. *Miraculous providences*, such as the dividing of the Red Sea, the bringing of water from a flinty rock, feeding a multitude with a few loaves, restoring sight to one born blind, and raising the dead by a word, are such events as the divine agency produces, visibly in suspension of, or opposition to the known and settled laws of nature. *Gracious providences* are those exercises of divine agency upon the hearts of men, which change, renew and sanctify them.

From these remarks it is easy to see, that neither *extraordinary*, nor *gracious providences*, can, with propriety, be called *miraculous*. It may also be seen that there is no ground for what some have called *special providences*; since there are not different kinds or species of providence; but the same Divine Providence or agency, operating upon different things, or in different circumstances, produces various effect.

2. If the Divine Providence is universal, then we may infer the existence of God from every object we see, and from every event we observe. The universality of Divine Providence implies, that no creature or thing can exist, and that no event can take place without the agency of God, as its primary, efficient cause. And if so, every object in nature, and every event of time, proves the existence of Deity. The existence of God may be inferred with as much certainty from the existence of one particle of matter, as from the existence of this globe, from the growth of a hair as from the growth of an oak, from the falling of a sparrow as from the drowning of the world by the deluge. Hence,

3. It appears that to deny the universality of Divine Providence amounts to a denial of the divine existence. To say that God's agency is not universal is the same as to say, that some things may exist, or some events take place without his agency. But, if one thing may exist without the divine agency, why not another, and another? If one particle of dust might come into being, and continue to exist, without divine agency, so might another, and a million, or the whole globe of earth. And if one event may come to pass without divine agency, so may another, and all the events of time. To maintain that a hair can grow, or a sparrow fall, without divine agency, is to sap the foundation of all our reasonings in proof of a God from his works.

There are not a few, at this day, who hold to Divine Providence, but deny its universality. Let such beware. Their sentiments border on atheism; and it will be well, if they do not, sooner or later, land them on that region of darkness, perplexity and despair.

4. If Divine Providence is universal, then it is as easy to account for the taking place of one event as of another. Power belongeth unto God; with him all things are possible. His agency is adequate to the production of any event, either in the natural

natural or moral world. Though we cannot investigate the *mode* in which the invisible and incomprehensible Divinity operates ; yet, we cannot doubt, for a moment, that his agency is adequate to the production of any event, that ever has taken place, or that it is predicted ever will. He can move or stop the wheels of nature. He can turn the hearts of his rational creatures, as easily as he turns the rivers of water. Hence, the divine agency is an adequate cause of any event, and will as easily account for one event as another. Some, who deny the universality of Divine Providence, have been puzzled and baffled in their endeavours to account for the origin of evil, the fall of man, the moral depravity of human nature, and the change of heart, called regeneration. And it is utterly impossible, upon any hypothesis whatever, to account for these events, or any others, if we set aside the universal, efficient agency of the GREAT FIRST CAUSE. But, admit this, and all is perfectly easy. Though we cannot, in ten thousand instances, assign the final causes of event, or tell *why* they are ordered so, rather than otherwise ; yet we need be at no loss for the primary, efficient cause of any event whatever.

5. If Divine Providence is universal, then it is easy to see, that God might have foreknown all things from eternity. For, upon this supposition, for God to foreknow all things, was only for him to foreknow what he himself would do, or what creatures and things he would create, and how he would move, govern and dispose of them. And, it is very easy to conceive with the apostle, that all God's own works should have been known unto him from the beginning.

But, upon supposition the divine agency is not universal, it is impossible to conceive how God should have foreknown those things and events which are independent of his agency. Foreknowledge implies that the things and events foreknown, were certainly future. Contingent or uncertain events may be *conjectured*, but cannot be *foreknown*. What, then, could render it certain, in eternity, that those events would take place in time, which are supposed to take place by chance, or without any cause, or independent of divine agency ? Suppose, for instance, a volition now arises in the mind of a certain man, without any causal influence of the Deity, immediate or remote ; how was it certain, a minute ago, that such a volition would ever arise in his mind ? God did not make it certain, by the supposition. The man himself did not make it certain, for he did not so much as know he should have it. To suppose that any other *creature* made it certain, will not relieve any difficulty. Will any pretend that contingency, chance, or no cause, made it certain ? But, if it was *uncertain* whether this man would have his present volition, how did God foreknow it ? Shall we say that God's understanding is infinite, and that he has ways of knowing things and events, which we, shortsighted mortals, cannot

cannot investigate? Very true. But has God any way of knowing that to be *certain*, which is altogether *uncertain*? If not, it follows, demonstrably, that God did not foreknow any thing, in eternity, which takes place in time, independently of his agency. Those, therefore, who deny the universal agency of God, and yet hold that God foreknew all things and events in eternity, are inconsistent with themselves.

6. If God's providence is *universal*, it follows that he *might* have *decreed* all things from eternity. Where is the difficulty of conceiving that God might have determined, from eternity, all that he himself would do in time? Was he not sufficiently sagacious, wise and good to do it? Or, is it not common for wise beings to lay a plan, or draw up a scheme of operation, before they begin to act? What conceivable harm could it do, for God to determine, from eternity, what he would do, how he would operate? It could neither injure himself nor his creatures, provided he determined to do nothing but what is *right*. It could not injure his creatures; for God's influence upon them and disposal of them, is just the same, whether it was foredetermined or not. But if God might have determined all his *own conduct* from eternity, then he might have determined all things from eternity; for all things take place in consequence of divine agency; God's providence is universal. And if God is in one mind, from everlasting to everlasting, absolutely unchangeable, *must* he not have *decreed* all his *own conduct* from the beginning? Or, if God *foreknew*, from before the foundation of the world, just what he should do in every instance, does it not from hence follow, that he had purposed what he would do in every instance? How does God foreknow he shall do any thing, unless he is determined to do it? The doctrine of divine decrees, the doctrine of divine foreknowledge, and the doctrine of divine providence, are intimately connected. One of them cannot be denied without virtually subverting the other; nor can one of them be consistently maintained, without an assent to the rest.

7. Is divine providence universal? Then we ought to acknowledge God in *all our ways*. The doctrine of divine providence is a very *practical* doctrine. It teaches us to see God in every object, and to acknowledge his holy and sovereign hand in every event. It teaches us to live near to God, to walk softly before him, and to commit the keeping of our bodies and our souls to his hand. If we receive favours, let them come to us by whatever means, we ought to thank God for them; for he is the giver of every good and perfect gift. If we experience afflictions, by whatever means they come upon us, we should refer them to the correcting hand of God, and exercise filial submission; for, there is not evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it. Such a realizing sense of the presence and agency of God is our reasonable service. And hence we see,

that, no sooner is a man renewed in the temper of his mind, no sooner are the blindness, unbelief and atheism of his heart renewed, than he sees God in every thing. Every object which he beholds displays the power, wisdom and glory of the Creator. The whole world appears, in his view, to be full of God.

8. Saints have reason to rejoice. All things are safe in the hand of God. He knows what is best, he chooses what is best, and he can do what is best. All things are ordered and disposed of by Infinite Wisdom and Benevolence, in the best possible manner, to advance the divine glory and the greatest good of the universe. Saints believe, and they are contented and happy in believing, that, whatever befalls themselves or others, however they or others may be disposed of in time or eternity, God will be glorified and the first wish of every benevolent heart completely gratified. Surely then, *light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.*

9. Impenitent sinners have reason to tremble. They are in the hand of God who can do with them as the potter doth with the clay. While they deny, or reason against, or oppose in any way his universal agency, they are contending with the Almighty. And *wo unto him that striveth with his Maker.* They can neither counteract the divine counsels, nor get out of the divine hand. They must be instruments of God's glory, willingly or unwillingly: they must be vessels of mercy, or vessels of wrath. How hazardous their present situation! Unless they become *reconciled to God, they must perish. For who hath ever hardened himself against God, and prospered.*

PHILANDER.

For the Mass. Miss. Magazine.

THE NOBLE BEREANS, AND IGNOBLE THES- SALONIANS.

BEREA and Thessalonica were towns in Greece. Their inhabitants were chiefly of the Greek nation; but there were in them, as in almost all the other towns of note, in the Roman empire, Jewish emigrants, who had built synagogues or houses of public worship, in which they assembled to hear the scriptures read, and to worship God, according to the law of Moses. To these emigrant Jews, the apostles, in their travels, felt it their duty first to preach the gospel. Thus did Paul and Silas, at Thessalonica and Berea, after their miraculous escape from the prison of Philippi. But the Jews, in these places, received them in a very different manner. While the Thessalonians treated them injuriously, the Bereans were *more noble, and received them kindly.* It is the design of the following observations, to point out several respects, in which the Jews

Jews in Berea were *more noble* than those in Thessalonica ; agreeably to the account in Acts xvii. 1—13.

1. The Bereans were *more noble* in the temper and disposition of their minds. They appear to have possessed a candid, honest and upright temper of mind, which led them to a diligent and impartial inquiry after truth and duty. They were willing to embrace truth let it come from what quarter it might, or however different it might be from their former opinions ; and they were willing to see their duty, when set before them in a clear light, however it might vary from or condemn their former practice. They were not disposed to condemn a doctrine merely because it was new, or because they could not perfectly understand or fully comprehend it. They were willing to suspect the judgment of their own imperfect and short-sighted understandings, and to suppose that possibly some other men might have better advantages, or have made a better use of them, and so have arrived to higher degrees of knowledge, and more consistent and scriptural sentiments in religion than themselves. They neither *leaned to their own understandings*, nor trusted their own hearts. Every one can see that there was something truly noble in this candid, impartial, ingenuous spirit, which actuated the Bereans and led them to such a diligent and honest search after truth and duty. And every one can see, that there was something low and despicable in the spirit which actuated the Jews of Thessalonica. *They were moved with envy.* They felt spiteful towards those who presumed to propagate a doctrine different from their own, and to make proselytes among the people, to the injury of their own reputation and interest. They evidently had a narrow, bigoted spirit, which led them to discard, with disdain, every sentiment different from their own, and to despise and hate them that preached it.

2. The Bereans were *more noble* than the Thessalonians in their treatment of Paul and Silas. Though it is wrong to go after those, or even to receive them into our houses, whom we know to be false teachers, or who bear visible and evident marks of being such ; yet we ought to receive and welcome those who come to us in the character of God's ambassadors and appear to be such, so long as their doctrine and demeanor correspond with their professions. The apostles claimed to be the ministers of God ; and their lives were suitable to their high pretensions. Accordingly, the Bereans nobly received them, and treated them in a friendly, hospitable manner. They freely admitted them into their houses, opened to them the doors of their synagogue, promptly attended on their ministrations, and listened to their public discourses.

But very different from this was the conduct of the Thessalonian Jews. So far from giving Paul and Silas a friendly and hospitable reception, they raised a mob and assaulted the house in which they were lodged. *Moved with envy, they took unto them certain lewd fellows*

lows of the baser sort, (men of loose principles and vicious lives) and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, saying, These that have turned the world upside down have come hither also. Instead of opposing Paul and Silas with reason and argument, they endeavoured to bear them down with a mob, riot and uproar. Persecution is generally carried on by the enemies of the truth. The opposers of the gospel, while they make the most specious professions of a desire for peace and concord, will frequently raise a tumult and set a place all in confusion; and then lay the blame to the quiet, harmless and peaceable ministers of Christ. But what makes the conduct of these Thessalonians towards the apostle and his followers appear unspeakably dishonourable and base is, their misrepresenting their views and designs, that they might arm the civil authority against them. Christ's kingdom is not of this world. It is a spiritual kingdom. And his faithful ministers are free from political intrigues. They aim neither at wealth, nor honour, nor power. But it is frequently the case, that their enemies, having no real charge to exhibit against them, and anxious to crush them, accuse them of dark designs against government and the powers that be. Thus these Thessalonian Jews accused Paul and Silas before the rulers of their city. These men, say they, who have turned the world upside down, have come hither also; whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cesar, saying, that there is another king, one Jesus. How mean and dastardly is such conduct!

3. The Jews of Berea were more noble than those of Thessalonica, in the reception they gave the sermons of the apostle. The Thessalonians would not so much as hear a second sermon; but forsook the house of God in a violent passion, and went into the city, to excite a tumult, collect a mob, and by false and slanderous accusations, to enrage the magistrates against these men of God. The Bereans, on the other hand, though there might be something new and perhaps strange to them in the apostle's doctrine, at first hearing; yet, not only came together to hear him, again and again, but paid the most close and solemn attention to what was delivered. *They received the word with all readiness of mind.* This implies, not only that they were eager to hear the word and solemnly attentive to what was delivered; but also, that they cordially embraced the truths advanced, so far as they were able to understand them. They were free from a captious, cavilling spirit. They valued truth as the *pearl of great price.* They received with meekness the *ingrafted word.* Such an attentive, solemn, teachable temper, in the hearers of the gospel, is truly noble and beautiful. But, on the other hand, the conduct of those, who, like the bigoted, self-sufficient and envious Jews of Thessalonica, "hate

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the light and will not come to it," who absent themselves from God's house, because some mysterious or humbling truths are exhibited there, and, instead of hearing the truth with candour, endeavour to raise a party against the preachers of it, is truly mean and contemptible.

4. The Bereans not only received the word with all readiness of mind; but, what still adds to the nobleness and respectability of their characters, *they searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.* The only scriptures they then had were those of the Old Testament. In them, the advent of Christ, the time, place and circumstances of his birth, his character, works, sufferings, death and resurrection, were predicted. Hence it became the incumbent duty of the Jews, who possessed these scriptures, knew them to be divine, and were led by them, at that time, universally to expect the Messiah, to search these sacred records and compare the predictions of the prophets with the character and works of Christ. Hence Christ told them, *Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.* Thus the noble Bereans did. Whilst other Jews, and the Thessalonians in particular, rejected the gospel without examination, the Bereans brought it to the test of the law and the testimony. They had no interest to serve, but that of truth. Though the gospel bore hard upon their nation for murdering the Lord of life and glory; though some of its doctrines were mysterious, others humbling, and others alarming; though its requirements were strict and the self-denial, in openly embracing it, at that period of persecution, very great; yet, they were determined to embrace it, if they should find it agreeable to the oracles of God. Hence *they searched the scriptures, to see whether the things, spoken by the apostles, were so.* They were diligent and unremitting in this business. It was their daily business. They viewed it to be a matter of great moment, as they would have to answer to God for the use they made of that holy word, which he, in infinite condescension and kindness, had vouchsafed to give them. This was acting a rational and consistent part. Surely if the Bible is the word of God, it demands our solemn attention and diligent and careful perusal. It is reasonable to try every doctrine we hear advanced, by that infallible standard. But, to acknowledge the scriptures as of divine authority, and, at the same time, to discard doctrines which it plainly teaches, and receive others which it pointedly condemns, or to form our religious sentiments without a diligent, careful and prayerful perusal of the sacred pages, is quite irrational, inconsistent and unchristian.

PHILANDER.

THOUGHTS

THOUGHTS ON ETERNITY.

Extracted from the Works of an English Writer of the last Century.

ETERNITY has generally been considered as divisible into two parts, which have been termed, eternity *a parte ante*, and eternity *a parte post*; that is, in plain English, that eternity which is past, and that eternity which is to come. And does there not seem to be an intimation of this distinction in Psalm xc. 2: "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God." *Thou art God from everlasting*: Here is an expression of that eternity which is past. *To everlasting*: Here is an expression of that eternity which is to come.

But leaving duration without beginning to HIM, who only *inhabiteth eternity*; let us turn our thoughts on duration without end. What is this eternity? With what comparison shall we compare it? Let us compare it with the several degrees of duration with which we are acquainted. An ephemeron fly lives six hours, from six in the evening to twelve. This is a short life compared to that of a man, which continues threescore or fourscore years. And this itself is short, if it be compared to the nine hundred and sixty nine years of Methuselah. Yet what are these years, yea, all all that have succeeded each other from the time that the heavens and the earth were erected, to the time when the heavens shall pass away, and the earth, with the works of it shall be burnt up, if we compare it to the length of that duration, which never shall have an end!

In order to illustrate this, a late author has repeated that striking thought of St. Cyprian. Suppose there were a ball of sand as large as the globe of earth; suppose a grain of this sand were to be annihilated, reduced to nothing, in a thousand years, yet that whole space of duration, wherein this ball would be annihilating, at the rate of one grain in a thousand years, would bear infinitely less proportion to eternity, duration without end, than a single grain of sand would bear to all the mass.

Let us consider another comparison. Suppose the ocean to be so enlarged as to include all the space between the earth and the starry heavens. Suppose a drop of this water to be annihilated once in a thousand years; yet that whole space of duration, wherein this ocean would be annihilating, at the rate of one drop in a thousand years, would be infinitely less in proportion to eternity, than one drop of water to that whole ocean.

But, if naked eternity, so to speak, be so vast, so astonishing an object, as even to overwhelm our thoughts, how does it still enlarge the idea to behold it clothed with either happiness or misery! Eternal bliss or pain! Everlasting happiness or misery!

One

One would think it would swallow up every other thought in every reasonable creature. Allow me only this, "Thou art on the brink of either a happy or miserable eternity ;" thy Creator bids thee choose the one or the other ; and one would imagine no rational creature could think on any thing else. One would suppose that this single point would engross his whole attention. Certainly it ought so to do ; certainly if these things are so, there can be but *one thing needful*. O let you and I, at least, whatever others do, choose that better part which shall never be taken away from us !

ANECDOTES.

MR. HOWE married the daughter of the Rev. George Hughes of Plymouth. He was accustomed to carry on a weekly correspondence with his father-in-law in Latin. One evening, Mr. Howe's house caught fire, and would probably have been reduced to ashes, if it had not been extinguished by a heavy shower. On that very day, Mr. Howe had received a letter from Mr. Hughes, ending with this beautiful prayer : "Let the dew of heaven be upon your dwelling."

THE excellent Mr. Flavel, on a voyage from Dartmouth to London, whither he fled from the cruel persecutions of the mayor of Dartmouth, was overtaken in a storm. The vessel was driven so near some dangerous rocks, that both the master and seamen concluded, that if the wind did not quickly change, they must of necessity be wrecked. While circumstances were thus perilous, Mr. F. called all that could be spared into the cabin to prayer, and commended himself and them to God. Scarcely had he closed his supplication, when one came down shouting "Deliverance ! deliverance ! God is a God hearing prayer ; the wind has changed."

Religious Intelligence.

LETTER

From Mr. Morrison, the Chinese Missionary from the London Society, to the Rev. Dr. Staughton.

REV. SIR,

CANTON, Sept. 30, 1807.

AFTER a passage of one hundred and thirteen days from New York, I arrived at Macao roads on the fourth instant. Our dear Lord graciously preserved me and my companions on ship board, amidst some heavy gales of wind in the Indian Ocean.

When

[May,

When on shore at the Island of Java, amongst the Malays, I observed that the impositions of the man Mahummed prevailed amongst them. I was led to wish that the believers on the western continent would send a missionary to Batavia, to declare amongst them the unsearchable riches of Christ. To Englishmen that post is inaccessible. Without the mosque, at Angir, in the straits of Sunda, is a pool, in which the Malays wash their feet before they enter into the holy place: but of the blood of Jesus, which cleanses polluted consciences, they know nothing.

The field of missionary labour in China is inconceivably extensive. O when ! when will the time come in which it may be said of the kingdoms of this world, "they are become the kingdoms of our God ?" Whatever the wish of the people of this country be, their ignorance, idolatry, and superstition cry in the most melting language, "come over and help !" The instances that have occurred during my short stay here of the grossest idolatry have been frequent.

My first object is to acquire the language, and in order to that, permission to reside here. I hope the Lord will ordain it so; but there is, according to human probability, much reason to fear it will be denied.

The Chinese are surprised that I have come hither, being neither captain, mate, supercargo, nor doctor. I was at first very much teased by their inquiries and solicitations to purchase goods. They have not learned to call me any thing more than "the passenger."

I felt very much, a few days ago, for the priests of a very large temple of Foe, on an island opposite to the factories. Boys are initiated and trained up to the priesthood. The young men were very ignorant and simple. They asked if we had gods like theirs, in America; if we burnt sweet scented wood to them, &c. When I said we had not two, three, or four "poo-sæt" gods, but only one, they were quite surprised.

There are at this temple one hundred and sixty priests, and nearly the same number of idols, some of them fifteen or twenty feet high.

Favour me with a line, and sometimes remember at the throne him, who is yours in the faith of our Lord Jesus,

ROBERT MORRISON.

TO THE SAME.

Serampore, 16th Nov. 1807.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

YOUR very obliging letter, dated 18th November, 1806, gave me great pleasure, and I owe you many thanks for it. How different is Christian love from all other affections ! The love of Christ constrains us and draws our hearts together; though we have never seen each other in the flesh, and never may, this sacred binding principle unites us and makes us hail the day when we shall see and be with each other to part no more.

I am placed over a small church at Dinagepore, and have lately had two persons added to it, and I hope for another shortly; but ours is a day of small, very small things. What you say encourages me; "generations to come will rejoice in the harvest that grace ensures from the seed you are sowing." Who more than the Christian missionary may say, "none of us liveth to himself, none of us dieth to himself." Oh ! that I may live for my Saviour and my fellow creatures, and die, sealing my eternal obligations to him with my last breath. It is truly sowing *in tears* often; but this is our encouragement, the promise is not only to Whitfield, converting thousands, but to the labourer, whose present fruit is only *tears*. "He shall reap in joy."

I have lately been reduced to a state of great weakness and lassitude, so that I was prevented from engaging in active labours for some months; but a visit to Serampore, and the change of air, have in a great measure restored me.

I rejoice

I rejoice that American Christians have lately done *so much* for the cause of the translations here; and I hope it will not be a transient flame of zeal, for the expense of these translations will continue for some years to come. When accomplished—when the words of eternal life are translated and published in ten languages, will there not be joy on earth, will there not be joy in heaven?

I remain, Rev. and dear Sir,
most affectionately yours,
IGN. FERNANDEZ.

*Letter from the Rev. W. Carey to the
Rev. W. Rogers, D. D.*

Calcutta, Nov. 25, 1807.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I LEARN from Captain Jones that the Bingham will sail in a day or two, and therefore write you a hasty line, intending to make amends, by a more circumstantial account of our affairs in my next.

We, my dear brother, have lately been in a very perilous situation. Government sent us a letter absolutely requiring us to remove our printing press to Calcutta, that it might be under the inspection of proper officers appointed by them for that purpose, and requiring us not to preach to the natives, distribute pamphlets, or do any thing which had a *tendency to convert* the natives. You may suppose that this caused us much distress, and occasioned many particular and special meetings for prayer; it did so, and the Lord heard and delivered us from all our fears.

The Danish governor was very firm; he assured us that he would not suffer the printing press to be removed by any negotiation, and that if forcible measures were resorted to, he would strike the flag and surrender himself a prisoner of war. We were, however, greatly distressed. The idea of a breach of amity between two nations, taking its rise from us, was a matter of deep concern; we therefore resolved to try

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all mild measures while we could. Myself, therefore, and brother Marshman requested a private audience with Lord Minto. We conversed with him freely upon the affairs of the mission. He treated us with much respect, and at our request gave us leave to present him with a private memorial upon the subject of the mission; which we did, and which was followed by a letter from government to us, revoking the order respecting the press, and recognising the circumstance of our distributing pamphlets through their dominions.

All this distress arose from a Persian translation of a Bengalee pamphlet, which contained a life of Mahummed, mostly extracted from the preliminary discourses to Sale's Koran, and followed by a few reasons why we did not believe the Koran to be of divine authority, or Mahummed to be a prophet of God. This pamphlet was put into the hands of a Mussulman, who took the shortest way of answering it; he showed it to his master, and he represented the matter to government, and occasioned us all the trouble and anxiety above mentioned.

Though deeply distressed, yet I felt a confidence in God that he would make all these trials turn out ultimately for the furtherance of the gospel; I trust this will indeed be the case. I am, very affectionately,
yours,

W. CAREY.

*Letter from W. Carey to the Rev. Dr.
Staughton.*

Calcutta, Nov. 25, 1807.

My dear Brother Staughton,

I HAVE this day learned from Captain Jones, that the Bingham will sail immediately; I therefore have written to Dr. Rogers a hasty letter giving an account of some of our troubles; as I am not fond of seeing others querulous or of being so myself, I shall give you an account of some of our bright side circumstances.

Among the natives our success has lately been small, and gloomy things preponderate. We hear good tidings from one place about a hundred miles off; but near us see very little to encourage. Among the Europeans in Calcutta, the Lord has been working and our prospects are greatly improved. I have reason also to believe that one Armenian is converted. We have raised the shell of our place of worship, which including the portico is seventy feet square.

To-morrow my son Felix, and brother Chater, with their wives and children, sail for Rangoon; their baggage has been for some time on board the ship, but they have been detained by an embargo; O may God make them the instruments of abundant good to that dark country! in which the gospel of salvation by the blood of Christ has never yet been published to the natives, unless we admit that some of the Roman Catholic mission may have done it. We hope soon to set up three more missionary stations; the death of a much respected friend up the country has led to some steps which will probably end in the settling of a brother there: we think of trying immediately also to send one to Oorissa, and another to Chitagung. I hope no obstacles may arise to prevent these arrangements from taking place. Brother Fernandez has just left us; he has been down for the benefit of his health, which I am happy to say is, in a great measure, re-established. Brother Chamberlaine is at Cutwa, labouring with all his might in the work of the Lord! both he and brother Fernandez have seals to their ministry.

The printing of the first volume of the Bible in Bengalee is now finished, and that of the second which will contain the historical books from Joshua to Esther (inclusive) is begun. If I can see this finished and a second edition of the Pentateuch, I shall feel easy about the Bengalee Bible; the translation will undoubtedly admit of further improvements, but they will be in-

considerable when compared with the bulk of the work.

The Sangskrit New Testament is printed to the middle of the Acts of the Apostles. That in the Ooris-sa language to the middle of John's gospel. In Mahratta and Hindoos-thanee Matthew is nearly finished, and the printing of it in the Gu-jarattee is begun. We had begun printing the Persian New Testament, but a converted Mussulman (convinced of the falsehood of Mahummedanism by reading the Koran) Mr. Nathaniel Sabot, an Ara-bian, one of Mahummed's own fam-ily, who has resided several years in Persia, coming to Serampore, the printing of Persian was de-sered until he could revise and cor-rect it. He is now with Mr. Martyn an evangelical clergyman, who is with all his soul labouring in the Persian translation. Five other translations are carrying on; but the printing must be delayed until we can cast types in the characters, which, though we have constantly four or five letter founders at work, will require time. I hope our graci-ous God will carry us through the whole.

I must conclude by assuring you that you and my American brethren are frequently remembered by me in my poor addresses to the throne of mercy; give my Christian love to all who feel interested in our concerns, particularly to Mrs. Staughton and to Mr. and Mrs. Ralston. Yours, affectionately,

W. CAREY.

REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN
PLEASANT VALLEY, NEW YORK.
The following Narrative of a revival
of religion, in a letter from the Rev.
John Clark to his friend in Philadel-
phia, we insert with pleasure: and
we invite similar communications
from all who may have it in their
power to make them. [Evan. Int.]

ACCORDING to promise, I now send you, for the use of the Evangelical Intelligencer, a concise history of the late revival of religion in the Presbyterian church of Pleasant Valley, in the state of New-York.

Some

Some time in the month of June, 1799, for the first time I made a visit to this church. It was then in a miserable situation indeed, without a minister, in debt, and without any revenue to liquidate it, or any human prospects of a change for the better. The spirits of the people were broken, and unanimity all but gone, as few could be found among them who had any respect for the power of religion, or zeal for God and his glory. In October of the same year, I spent three weeks with them. Beside preaching twice on each Lord's day, I delivered a number of sermons in private houses; the word preached seemed to be owned of God; and many were awakened to a sight and sense of their guilt and danger. Some in this condition opened their minds to me, to know what they should do to be saved. At the same time they were desirous to obtain a gospel minister to instruct them in the way of salvation; and break to their souls the bread of life.

For some time previous to this period, there had been neither meetings for prayer nor for any other religious exercises, excepting when supplies preached in the congregation by order of presbytery, and then but few attended to hear the word; nor were these generally willing to do any thing towards supporting the gospel. A more gloomy prospect is rarely seen in any of our congregations, yet at this time, a small number who resided here cleaved to God, and acted with kindness and liberality towards the gospel ministers who supplied them and laboured for the salvation of souls. As I soon found that a number became deeply impressed with eternal things, some plan appeared necessary to help those heavy laden souls, and to fan the heavenly flame which God had been pleased to enkindle among them. Nothing appeared more likely to promote my views than establishing meetings for prayer. With this in view, I visited the elders of the church, to cherish in them the hope that God was about to pour out of his Spirit

upon them, and to convince them, that it was their duty to unite in prayer to him for the blessing they so much needed.

With some labour and perseverance, I got the consent of all the elders to make an attempt to establish meetings for prayer; and I then published a meeting for this and other religious exercises, to take place on the next Lord's day, subjoining an exhortation to influence the congregation to give their attendance. At the same time a promise was made, that, on condition they would continue to support these meetings, I would, Providence permitting, preach for them three or four days in each month from that time until the next spring.

On the next Lord's day, a goodly number met for the most pleasing of all employments, that of worshiping God. The zeal of the pious at this meeting was much augmented. From this era, the aspect of things happily changed for the better, and in less than one month meetings were multiplied and thronged. Their hopes were raised that the time to favour them was come, nor were their expectations disappointed. God even exceeded their hopes, in displaying his sovereign power in the salvation of man. In evidence of this, a number have left this world in the full assurance of faith, who were some of the first fruits of this revival. A spirit of prayer and supplication was poured out on this church, which has not only continued, but increased from that time to the present.

According to promise, they were visited once in each month. In February following many were added to the church; and if we may form a judgment from what we have seen in their lives, they were "of such as shall be saved." In the spring following I became their pastor, and was happy in seeing the pleasure of the Lord prosper among his people. Sinners were awakened and many hopefully converted to God.

This effusion of the Spirit was like "the dew on the mountains of Zion,

Zion, where God commanded his blessing, even life forevermore." Nothing of bodily exercises was seen, except in three cases; one was a man who came to church in great wrath against me for receiving his wife into the church on this day, for it was a sacramental season. He had not been there for a long time before God laid his hand upon him. The trembling of Felix seized him, insomuch that he shook the seats where he sat. Since that time he has obtained a hope, and seems to be an "Israelite indeed." The second case was that of a young man, but it produced no out-cry nor noise, nor did the congregation in general seem to be much affected by it. The third was the case of a young woman of about twenty-two years of age. When this happened, the assembly, through the time of sermon were as solemn as death, and as still as the grave. After the benediction was pronounced, the people began to go out of the house, but this woman finding her strength gone, cried, "Lord, have mercy on me." The cry seemed to be felt by all present. After some time, she who uttered it became a pattern of piety. With these exceptions, nothing characterized this awakening except the change seen in the lives of its subjects.

Within five years one hundred and twenty were admitted to church privileges, and not more than two or three have ceased to "adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour."

In the latter part of the year 1805, our prospects were clouded, on account of my health being so much impaired as to make it impossible to perform the duties of my station as I had done before, and because the influences of divine grace seemed to be withheld, while many were yet out of the Ark of safety and wholly regardless of their dreadful condition. These things were causes of much anxiety to many who loved God and his church.

But our thoughts were not as God's thoughts, for now the time to favour his people was at hand, and to advance his own glory by bring-

ing many home to himself. About this time I was called to preach in the south part of the congregation, which hitherto had not been visited with awakening influences. On the contrary the people here were careless and unmoved. I was directed to Luke xiii. 5. *Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish:* the word was accompanied with power to the hearts of many. Four persons however were more deeply alarmed than the rest, so as to make it almost impracticable for them to get home. To use their own words, their "sin, guilt, and danger, appeared so evident as almost to crush them to the earth." Yet nothing was seen except greater attention, and much weeping. On the last day of January in the evening, one of these four that was so deeply affected a few weeks before, professed to find *redemption in the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of his sins*, and this youth is now pursuing his studies for the gospel ministry. On the first Lord's-day in the year 1806, the work appeared more visible. When the exercises of a meeting for prayer were over, as was common, the pious people began to sing, on which another of the four above-mentioned, cried out, "O do pray for me, a miserable sinner." Accordingly one of the elders present complied with his wishes. In the time of prayer he called out saying, "The storm is over, the Lord has had mercy on my soul! O how lovely is a sin pardoning God." From this memorable evening, the work went on with great power and rapidity. Men, young and old, as well as women and children, were the subjects of it. Many fell to the ground like Saul on his way to Damascus. Yet we had no noise nor disorder. Had not the eye seen this work, the ear had not known any thing of it. In this situation, with much distress and bathed in tears, they would exclaim, when spoken to, against themselves and the wickedness and hardness of their hearts. Like Hannah of old, we could see their lips move in prayer to the Almighty with much earnestness,

earnestness, while their countenances expressed the feelings of their minds. As their views changed, their countenances would change, and they would appear overcome with the views of Christ in his mediatorial character, accompanied with expressions full of love, gratitude, astonishment and praise. In less than four weeks this glorious flame spread throughout this whole congregation. Their meetings were increased to fifteen in each week, and there was not a meeting in which the divine power was not displayed and seen. Every body seemed to be pressing into the kingdom of God, crying, *Men and brethren what shall we do to be saved?* Those were days worth living to see, and to enjoy; yes, Sir, with the Psalmist it may be said with emphasis at such a time—*One day in the house of my God is better than a thousand in the tents of wickedness, and more to be desired than thousands of silver.*

Every evening I continued to speak, and almost every day I was visiting my people. My study was abandoned. To get knowledge is an excellent thing, but to be instrumental in saving souls is much better. In sermon time and in prayer, as well as in the singing of psalms, nothing remarkable was seen, except their fixed attention and falling tears. But in conversation with the awakened, and when they were singing spiritual songs, after public worship, falling down was common. These things were not considered as signs of the genuineness of this work, or any evidence of its authenticity, any more than Belshazzar's or Felix's tremblings. But in the midst of these things, and apparently by their instrumentality in some instances, the work was carried on. These things we are disposed to leave to God, who worketh all things according to his own will. In his dispensations and government, we ought to be happy and rejoice.

On January 19th was a sacramental season, and one of the most remarkable ever seen by us. It will not be forgotten, by many, as long

as memory lasts and gratitude remains. The exercises of the day were long and solemn. After the benediction was pronounced, the people took their seats again. I renewed my labours in holding forth Christ as the only Saviour of sinners. The most hardy among the people were made to tremble. In less than one hour, hundreds were made to feel their lost condition, and the need they stood in of Christ and his salvation. From that memorable day to this, the cross of Jesus has triumphed here, to the praise of his glorious grace.

In a remote corner of this congregation, where not more than three families lived that belonged to our church, and only one of these to the communion of the church, in the beginning of this month, the work appeared with power. Many fell to the floor, to the astonishment of many unbelievers, who appeared much awakened and deeply impressed with a sense of eternal things. The prospect here is now as promising as in any other part of the congregation.

I have been more minute in the former part of this narrative, than I should have been, had it not been that I wished to encourage other churches, whose condition now is not unlike that of this church in 1799. At that time they could do no more than have a minister two-thirds of his time. The number in communion was then about sixty, but now about three hundred. They have paid all their debts, and have a handsome property beside, with one of the largest congregations in the state.

In the absence of gospel ministers, some private Christians have occasionally spoken to the people here; and through the whole of it we may say with peculiar propriety, that God has carried on his work not by human power, but by his Spirit. From this revival much good is likely to come to the church. Five young gentlemen, who have in the judgment of charity been made the subjects of piety, have devoted themselves to the gospel ministry.

One

[May,

One of them is now labouring for Christ in the vineyard, and four more are pursuing their studies for the same end.

Christian brethren, who may read this narrative, do you not want to see such a time as has been described? Do you not want to see your sons and daughters converted to God? Then bestir yourselves in

prayer, and be zealous in your families, and help your ministers. You may then hope to see the work of the Lord prosper, and your children and households, in God's good time, brought home to Christ.

I have nothing further to add, but to subscribe myself your friend and brother in Christ,

JOHN CLARK.

Poetry.

THE AMERICAN HERO:

A Sapphic Ode.

BY NATHANIEL NILES, A. M.

- 1 WHY should vain mortals tremble at the sight of
Death and destruction in the field of battle,
Where blood and carnage clothe the ground in crimson,
Sounding with death-groans?
- 2 Death will invade us by the means appointed,
And we must all bow to the king of terrors;
Nor am I anxious, if I am prepared,
What shape he comes in.
- 3 Infinite goodness teaches us submission;
Bids us be quiet under all his dealings:
Never repining, but forever praising
God our Creator.
- 4 Well may we praise him; all his ways are perfect;
Though a resplendence, infinitely glowing,
Dazzles in glory on the sight of mortals
Struck blind by lustre!
- 5 Good is Jehovah in bestowing sunshine,
Nor less his goodness in the storm and thunder:
Mercies and Judgments both proceed from kindness—
Infinite kindness!
- 6 O then exult, that God forever reigneth:
Clouds, which around him hinder our perception,
Bind us the stronger to exalt his name, and
Shout louder praises!

7 Then

- 7 Then to the wisdom of my Lord and Master,
I will commit all that I have or wish for :
Sweetly as babes sleep will I give my life up,
When call'd to yield it.
- 8 Now, *Mars*, I dare thee, clad in smoky pillars,
Bursting from bomb-shells, roaring from the cannon,
Rattling in grape shot, like a storm of hailstones,
Torturing *Aether* !
- 9 Up the bleak heavens, let the spreading flames rise
Breaking like *Aetna* through the smoky columns,
Low'ring like Egypt o'er the falling city,
Wantonly burnt down.
- 10 While all their hearts quick palpitate for havock,
Let slip your blood hounds, nam'd the British lions ;
Dauntless as death stares ; nimble as the whirlwind ;
Dreadful as demons !
- ¶
- 11 Let oceans waft on all your floating castles ;
'Fraught with destruction horrible to nature :
Then, with your sails fill'd by a storm of vengeance,
Bear down to battle !
- 12 From the dire caverns made by ghostly miners,
Let the explosion, dreadful as volcanoes,
Heave the broad town, with all its wealth and people,
Quick to destruction !
- 13 Still shall the banner of the King of heaven
Never advance where I'm afraid to follow :
While that precedes me, with an open bosom,
War, I defy thee.
- 14 Fame and dear freedom *lure* me on to battle,
While a fell despot, grimmer than a death's-head,
Stings me with serpents, fiercer than Medusa's,
To the encounter.
- 15 Life, for my country and the cause of freedom,
Is but a trifle for a worm to part with ;
And if preserv'd in so great a contest,
Life is redoubled.

Norwich, (Con.) October, 1775.

ADDRESS

ADDRESS OF THE EDITORS.
.....

AT the close of the year, some account of the Magazine may be expected by our readers. As far as the Magazine has promoted the religious edification of those who read it, we would devoutly rejoice ; as far as it has failed of that object, we hope it will be found, in some degree, to arise from the unpropitious circumstances under which the work has been conducted. Most of the time all the editors have been distant from the place of publication ; most of them have been remote from each other ; and all burdened with other serious cares and important duties. Several of them have been so situated as to lend little or no assistance. The chief burden has fallen on a few, occupied with professional labours and various ministerial duties. Having thus continued the work for 5 years, ill health in some, and the multiplying duties of others, together with various other circumstances, admonished us that the Magazine was not likely to be so useful as it had been. In this situation we seriously and anxiously inquired what could be done. To refuse our brethren and friends in this eventful period a work, which possessed their confidence for truth and integrity, without a substitute, seemed to us an incalculable evil.

In this moment of indecision we received an affectionate invitation from our friends, the editors of the Panoplist, to unite with them in a joint publication. The offer was seriously considered by the Missionary society, and cordially accepted. All the profits of the intended work, taken by the Missionary Society and their friends, will go into their treasury. Editors have been appointed by the directors of the Society to unite with the editors of the Panoplist. The Society, therefore, will have the same reason for confidence in the new work as in their Magazine. The labour, which was bestowed on two, will now be united in one work. With pleasing confidence we declare that we hope the expected work will appear with valuable improvements ; that its merit will surpass its predecessors. It will advocate "the good old ways" of our pious forefathers ; it will not provoke opposition, nor flee from assailants ; it will advocate the doctrines of Calvinism in all their consequences ; it will record the benevolence of individuals and of public societies in the promotion of true religion ; it will record remarkable providences, connected with the interests of Zion ; it will record the devout experiences of Christians distinguished for their piety of every denomination ; it will record the work of God in the outpourings of his Spirit among Christians and pagans in every quarter of the world. Most sincerely do we recommend it to the friends of the Missionary Society to examine the contemplated publication.

It now only remains that we take an affectionate farewell of our kind readers. We have for several years sustained an important relation to each other. You have looked to us for a part of your religious information and improvement. Whether we have succeeded in our attempt you are the best judges. We trust that our doctrines have been *scriptural*, though presented in a plain manner : that our style has been serious, though not splendid ; that our pages have tended to impress your hearts with the vanity of the world, the importance of life, and the necessity of true religion. That we may hereafter meet, and prove each others comfort and joy, is the sincere and ardent-prayer of your affectionate friends,

THE EDITORS.

END OF VOL. V.

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